



Attention: Boaters!

Alabama boaters should be aware of and follow current marine sanitation laws

By Erica Shipman, Alabama Marine Police

Alabama's favorable weather conditions and abundant waterways mean that boating is a popular activity across the state. With over 1 million boaters enjoying Alabama's 1 million acres of lakes, 1,600 miles of rivers and 53 miles of coastline each year, comes a growing concern for clean water and other environmental issues, such as marine sewage and litter disposal.

Marine Sanitation Act

To combat these health and environmental problems, the Alabama Legislature passed Marine Sanitation Act 2002-59, which became effective in 2003. This Act regulates sewage discharge from recreational vessels and residence boats. The following is a synopsis of the Act:

- Portable toilets are prohibited from dumping raw sewage into any state waters.
- Discharge of untreated sewage is prohibited on all state waters. Gray water (galley water, bath and shower water, and bilge water) is exempt.
- All recreational vessels and residence boats with marine sanitation devices must be inspected annually by a Marine Police officer or other Department of Conservation employee. A compliance decal is issued if vessel meets the requirements of the Act and the Department.
- All marine sanitation devices must meet the U.S. Coast Guard and Environmental Protection Agency standards.
- Boats with holding tanks (Type III marine sanitation device) cannot moor, anchor, dock or be stored at marinas without pump-out facilities, except in a safety emergency.
- Marine Police officers or any duly sworn peace officer may board and inspect for compliance if there is probable cause to believe that a violation of this act or departmental rules has occurred. First time offenders will receive a warning and will have 90 days to come into compliance. Conviction of this Act will result in a minimum fine of \$100 up to a maximum fine of \$1,000

Following are the three types of marine sanitation devices:

USCG Type I: Generally a flow-through device that uses maceration and chemical treatment to kill bacteria prior to discharge.

USCG Type II: Generally a flow-through device that uses maceration, septic, and chemical treatment to kill bacteria prior to discharge.

USCG Type III: Prevents the discharge of sewage as sewage goes to a holding tank. The tank is later emptied by utilizing an on-shore, certified pump-out station.

NOTE: Under the Federal Clean Water Act, completely enclosed fresh-water lakes, reservoirs, and impoundments with no inlet or outlet for vessel traffic, and rivers not capable of interstate navigation are considered no discharge zones. In a no discharge zone, sewage discharge, whether treated or untreated, is prohibited. Type I and Type II marine sanitation devices are illegal to use in a no discharge zone unless sewage flows directly to a holding tank or the device is secured in such a way that it cannot be used.

Alabama's no discharge zones include the following bodies of water and any others that meet the federal guidelines:

- Smith Lake
- All lakes on the Tallapoosa River System
- All lakes on the Coosa River System with the exception of Weiss Lake

Marine Police officers conduct inspections of marine sanitation devices on a regular basis at marinas statewide. For a schedule of inspection sites, dates, and times, visit www.outdooralabama.com and click on "Boating."

If you do not have access to the Internet, you may contact a Marine Police district office or the Montgomery headquarters at the following telephone numbers:

District I: located on Lake Guntersville; services Tennessee River system and adjoining lakes; 1-888-903-7659

District II: located on Logan Martin Lake; services Coosa, Warrior, and upper Tallapoosa river systems and adjoining lakes; 1-800-499-1667

District III: located on Lake Martin; services Tallapoosa, Coosa, Chattahoochee and Alabama river system and adjoining lakes; 1-800-432-7389

District IV: located at Perdido Pass, Orange Beach; services coastal waters, Mobile, Warrior, Tensaw, Tombigbee river systems and Mobile Delta; 1-888-903-2583

Montgomery Headquarters: 1-800-272-7930



US COAST GUARD


Some Boats Banned on Three Lakes

During the 2006 legislative session, lawmakers passed Act 2006-398 as an addition to the marine sanitation law. This Act applies only to R.L. Harris (Lake Wedowee), Lake Martin, Weiss Lake and includes the following items:

1. Beginning October 1, 2006, there will be an absolute ban on recreational vessels that are greater than 26 feet, 11 inches and are rated by the manufacturer for or capable of a top speed in excess of 60 mph.
2. Beginning July 1, 2007, there is a ban on houseboats/residence vessels and recreational vessels that constitute a fully equipped dwelling similar in content to a mobile home, with a marine sanitation device, sleeping quarters, and a galley unless the vessel:
 - is licensed and in use as of July 1, 2006 and
 - has a current marine sanitation device inspection decal and
 - is moored at a marina or other facility with a certified pump-out station
3. Beginning July 1, 2007, there is a ban on boats that are over 30 feet, 6 inches and are not capable of a top speed of 60 mph unless the vessel:
 - is licensed and in use as of July 1, 2006 or
 - was on site and available for sale, as of July 1, 2006, at a marina located on one of the lakes

Boats that fall under items 2 or 3, or those needed for use on a temporary basis, will be issued a permit by the Department of Conservation to operate on that particular body of water, provided they meet the other conditions. If the vessel is sold, the permit will be transferred with the vessel. Permits will be available in spring 2007.

Sailboats equipped with a mast and sails and dependent on wind for propulsion during normal operation are exempt. Other vessels that are exempt include law enforcement, public safety, search and rescue, scientific research, dam operations and maintenance.

For questions about the new Act or any of the sanitation laws, please contact either the Marine Police district offices, the Montgomery headquarters or visit www.outdooralabama.com. 

Coastal Pumpout Facilities

Marina	Waterway
Dog River Marina	Dog River
Grand Mariner Marina	Dog River
Sundowner Marina	Dog River
Fowl River Marina	Dog River
Homeport Marina	Intercoastal Waterway
Grand Hotel Marina	Mobile Bay
Lake Forest Yacht Club	Mobile Bay
Bear Point Marina	Perdido Bay
Harbor Cove	Perdido Bay
Orange Beach Marina	Perdido Bay
Palm Harbor	Perdido Bay
Perdido Grande	Perdido Bay
SanRoc Cay Marina	Perdido Bay
The Yachtsman	Perdido Bay
Walter Trent Marina	Perdido Bay
Weeks Bay Marina	Weeks Bay

Inland Pumpout Facilities

Marina	Waterway
Franklin Ferry Marina	Bankhead Lake
Lighthouse Marina	Bankhead Lake
Alred Marina	Guntersville Lake
Brown's Creek Sailing Marina, Inc.	Guntersville Lake
Covenant Cove Marina	Guntersville Lake
Goose Pond Colony	Guntersville Lake
Jackson County Park	Guntersville Lake
Lakeside Sailing Center	Guntersville Lake
Lake Guntersville Yacht Club	Guntersville Lake
Riverbend Marina	Guntersville Lake
Siebold Campground and Marina	Guntersville Lake
Signal Point Marina	Guntersville Lake
Eagle Cove Marina	Holt Lake
Marina Cove	Lake Aliceville
Demopolis Yacht Basin	Lake Demopolis
Chewalla Creek Marina	Lake Eufaula
Lakepoint State Park	Lake Eufaula
Anchor Bay Marina	Lake Martin
Harbor Point Marina	Lake Martin
Kowaliga Marina	Lake Martin
Still Waters Resort	Lake Martin
The Ridge Marina	Lake Martin
Wind Creek State Park	Lake Martin
Paradise Point Marina	Lay Lake
Images, Inc.	Logan Martin Lake
Lighthouse Landing at Coosa Island	Logan Martin Lake
Paradise Pier	Logan Martin Lake
Rabbit Branch Marina, Inc.	Logan Martin Lake
Duskin's Point Marina	Smith Lake
Mallard Point Marina	Smith Lake
North Alabama Nautique	Smith Lake
Richard's Clearwater Marina, Inc.	Smith Lake
Southern Harbor Resort and Marina	West Point Lake
Bay Hill Marina	Wheeler Lake
Ditto Landing	Wheeler Lake
Joe Wheeler State Park	Wheeler Lake
Pirate's Chest Marina	Wheeler Lake
Riverwalk Marina	Wheeler Lake
Emerald Beach Marina	Wilson Lake
Stenson's Marina	Wilson Lake
Turtle Point Yacht and Country Club	Wilson Lake